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WESTERN EUROPE — CANADA — INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

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EC and Arab Experts to Meet in Abu Dhabi

Technical experts from the EC and the Arab League states will meet in Abu Dhabi on November 22-27 to discuss economic and technological cooperation. The Abu Dhabi session will mark the third meeting between experts of the two sides since the French first proposed a dialogue in early 1974. Specific projects have yet to be chosen.

The Arabs reportedly plan to ask the Nine to set a date at the next meeting or beforehand for a subsequent General Council at the ambassadorial level, but are not making prior acquiescence of the Nine a condition for the meeting in Abu Dhabi.

The Arab request would raise the troublesome question of representation for the Palestine Liberation Organization. The EC Nine had expected the Arabs to insist on an early Council and will favor postponement of the decision because they have been unable to agree on a response. The French, for example, have said they were ready to accept the Palestine Liberation Organization as a participant in the dialogue. The British have opposed any deviation from the denationalized formula at this time. They did agree last September at a meeting of EC foreign ministers in Venice that this position might have to be reconsidered if the Arab side made the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization a precondition for the continuation of the dialogue. Others of the Nine have proposed

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holding a denationalized meeting at the ambass-
adorial level. The EC Commission believes there
would be no way to avoid political content in
a meeting at this level and questions how it
would be possible to avoid explicit national
identification of ambassadors.

The aim of the Euro-Arab dialogue has been
to promote European technology and market opportu-
nities for Arab raw materials and funds to overcome
balance of payments deficits. Since the two sides
first met in Paris in late July 1974, little has
emerged other than the setting up of six working
groups on finance, industry, technology and
culture, farming, trade and infrastructure. The
upcoming meeting of experts is likely to result
in no major breakthroughs. (CONFIDENTIAL NOFORN)

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Swiss Face "Routine" Election

Little change is expected in the composition of the Swiss parliament after the national election on October 26. Following one of the duller campaigns in history, the four major parties of the center--which compose the present coalition--are expected to retain their representation, or perhaps improve it.

The small parties of the right reportedly are bitterly divided. Their counterparts on the left also are factionalized and may lose seats to the center parties. The Communists, however, are expected to retain their five seats.

The campaign has concentrated on economic issues, but the government's three "bourgeois" parties--the Radical Democrats, the Christian Conservatives, and the Farmers, Artisans, and Burghers--generally agree on measures to reduce unemployment and stem inflation. The Socialists--the fourth government party--have failed to develop ideas of their own to improve the economic situation and probably will "go along" with their partners. Moreover, with unemployment at a marginal 0.4 percent of the labor force and inflation below the West European average, the government is in a good position to counter most critics. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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International Fund for Agricultural Development

Delegates meet in Rome Monday to consider an international fund that may eventually provide poor states with up to \$1 billion in aid to develop and improve agriculture.

The industrialized states managed to strike a bargain with the developing country bloc at the special session of the UN in early September by agreeing to consider many of the poor countries' demands. The International Fund for Agricultural Development provides the opportunity to pledge funds to a program the developing country caucus has endorsed in an area of vital interest to all, but especially to the poorest states.

The US has offered to contribute up to \$200 million if others contribute proportionately. Many of the EC states back the fund and will likely announce pledges next week. The EC will not offer a pledge of its own, however, because West Germany blocked a community contribution last week. Bonn linked its decision to British obstructionism in seeking separate representation at the conference on international economic cooperation in December that will bring together 27 rich and poor states to discuss energy, raw materials, development, and financial issues. Bonn has also resisted contributing to the fund on grounds that it will divert contributions from other programs rather than provide new funds. In fact, the Germans may be concerned that a new fund might require an additional contribution, something they are not prepared to consider at a time of belt-tightening at home.

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Oil producers may also decide to support the fund actively. Iran is the only oil producer that has indicated that it will contribute even though the idea for the fund was first advanced by Arab states last year at the World Food Conference. A demonstration of generosity at the Rome meeting by the OPEC states might help improve their relations with the poor developing states. The latter--principally Africans--are especially resentful of the recent oil price increases and of what they see as attempts by the Arab states to manipulate black African states to support Arab causes, e.g., the recent UN votes linking zionism and racism. The Africans recognize that OPEC development aid has greatly increased but they point out that most of this aid has gone to other Moslem states. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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